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Nordiska Kompaniet

SWEDEN'S

"FOLKUNGARNA"

VISIT

ENGLAND

"FOLKUNGARNA"

Folkungarna is the local name for the Köping Youth Orchestra and Girl´s Choir combined. The name is really a pun. It has considerable historical importance in Sweden, but it can also be taken to mean "Folke´s young people."

When Mr. Folke Carlsson took over the music school in the community of Köping seven years ago, the teaching of music was on a small scale and confined almost entirely to the study of the pianoforte There were not many pupils, and their enthusiasm for music was restricted largely to the excellence of their own performances.

From the moment Mr. Folke Carlsson entered on the scene, an entirely new perspective was given to the whole idea of music-making. The piano, he argued, was a splendid instrument, but why should it be the only one studied? What was wrong with the violin, that mainstay of the wonderful old "Spelman" tradition for which Sweden is famous among the Nordic countries? Why not a flute? In short, why study by yourself ?

From the first, all pupils were required to play the recorder, whatever the instrument they had chosen as their main study. Then followed "group" playing, which proved to be such fun that, soon, an ordinary term´s work was not enough. Summer "camps" were organised, in which swimming, football, dancing to guitars, boating on the lakes and walking in the forests provided a growing sense of comradeship. But exciting as these "camps" were, the central theme never varied -music. Practice, rehearsals, tuition, and group exercises went on all the time.

At the end of such a camp, a farewell concert was given in the nearest little church - choral and orchestral - and the children´s parents were invited to attend. It is not surprising that, very soon, many schoolchildren in Köping were proud to be seen walking through the streets of the town carrying a violin case. They were members of Folkungarna.

FOLKUNGARNA (Continued)

The first concerts given by Folkungarna outside Köping were in Skåne, a province of south Sweden. These were so successful that they were followed, in 1970, by a visit to Finland and, in 1971 a tour in Denmark. All this time the scope of the young people's repertoire was increasing and is now extensive. The heart-warming reception given to them in both Finland and Denmark was a well-earned reward for the hard work that they had put in, and a great compliment for the dynamic leadership of their Dirigent, Mr. Folke Carlsson - "Folke" to all Folkungarna, and to all who know him.

Folkungarna are young people: many of them are children. None of them are experienced professional musicians, and people who attend their concerts during their forthcoming tour of England will not be listening to a Swedish equivalent of the London Symphony Orchestra. What they will hear, beyond any doubt, is an outpouring of spontaneous eager music-making of the kind which generates happiness in performers and listeners alike.

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KÖPING

The town of Köping (pronounced: Sherping) is a small, but important, industrial centre in middle Sweden. It has a population of twenty two thousand people and, although it is one hundred miles from the nearest sea - the Baltic - it is a port of considerable size.

It lies at the extreme western end of lake Mälaren on which Stockholm stands, and ice-breakers maintain an all-the-year-round channel for ships bringing in raw materials to the port and taking away Köping's engineering products of highest quality. In the deep-water harbour may be seen ships from all corners of the world.

Although an industrial town whose dynamic expansion over the last thirty years is almost without parallel, Köping is within a few minutes, in any direction, of the beautiful forests and lakes for which Sweden is so famous.

ABOUT THE COVER DESIGN

Gustav Vasa, "he of the beard", was a Swedish Nobleman who managed to escape from Stockholm when the Danes cut off the heads of the rest of the Swedish aristocracy there in 1521. He tried to rally the men of Mora to his standard, but they simply did not believe his tale of horror.

In despair, Gustav Vasa fled on skis to take refuge over the border in Norway. Meanwhile messengers had arrived in Mora fromStockholm, confirming all that Gustav Vasa had said. At once two of Mora´s best skiers set off to overtake the future King of Sweden, who turned back, joyfully, covering the fifty four miles on skis without a halt. This proved to be a turning point in Swedish history. Gustav Vasa raised an army, defeated the Danes and turned them out of Sweden, and became King of a country entirely freed from foreign occupation.

This epic marathon on skis is today celebrated annually in Sweden by the race known as Vasaloppet. It is held over the same course as that covered by Gustav Vasa; a tremendous sporting event perhaps unequalled elsewhere in the world. There is no prize for the winner - except a laurel wreath!

This year´s race, in which eight thousand competitors took part, was won by - a man of Mora!

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